

CHALLENGE



THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST NEWSPAPER OF PROGRESSIVE LABOR PARTY

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MAY DAY 2017

SOUTH AFRICA



ARGENTINA



THE PHILIPPINES



FRANCE



BROOKLYN



OUR FIGHT

- ☆Progressive Labor Party (PLP) fights to destroy capitalism and the dictatorship of the capitalist class. We organize workers, soldiers and youth into a revolutionary movement for communism.
- ☆The dictatorship of the working class — communism — can provide a lasting solution to the disaster that is today's world for billions of people. This cannot be done through electoral politics, but requires a revolutionary movement and a mass Red Army led by PLP.
- ☆Worldwide capitalism, in its relentless drive for profit, inevitably leads to war, fascism, poverty, disease, starvation and environmental destruction. The capitalist class, through its state power — governments, armies, police, schools and culture — maintains a dictatorship over the world's workers. The capitalist dictatorship supports, and is supported by, the anti-working-class ideologies of racism, sexism, nationalism, individualism and religion.
- ☆While the bosses and their mouthpieces claim "communism is dead," capitalism is the real failure for billions worldwide. Capitalism returned to Russia and China because socialism retained many aspects of the profit system, like wages and privileges. Russia and China did not establish communism.
- ☆Communism means working collectively to build a worker-run society. We will abolish work for wages, money and profits. While capitalism needs unemployment, communism needs everyone to contribute and share in society's benefits and burdens.
- ☆Communism means abolishing racism and the concept of "race." Capitalism uses racism to super-exploit Black, Latin, Asian and indigenous workers, and to divide the entire working class.
- ☆Communism means abolishing the special oppression of women— sexism—and divisive gender roles created by the class society.
- ☆Communism means abolishing nations and nationalism. One international working class, one world, one Party.
- ☆Communism means that the minds of millions of workers must become free from religion's false promises, unscientific thinking and poisonous ideology. Communism will triumph when the masses of workers can use the science of dialectical materialism to understand, analyze and change the world to meet their needs and aspirations.
- ☆Communism means the Party leads every aspect of society. For this to work, millions of workers — eventually everyone — must become communist organizers. Join Us!

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WHO WRITES FOR CHALLENGE?

The fact that CHALLENGE/PLP articles are not signed grows from PLP's criticism of the cult of the individual in the former socialist Soviet Union and China. We do not want to encourage the possibility of building up a "following" around any particular individual.

While an article may be written by one person, the final version is based on collective discussion and criticism. Many times this collective discussion even precedes an individual's writing of an article.

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Editorial

100 Days of Trump U.S. Imperialist Order in Peril

One hundred days into the Donald Trump presidency, the bosses' mouthpieces have rated it a failure by all measures. Trump's health care bill "is a zombie. His border wall is stalled. He's only now releasing basic principles of a tax plan. Even his executive order on immigration is tied up in the courts" (New York Times, 4/26).

Trump's ineffectual and volatile administration heightens the insecurities of the finance capital, the U.S. bosses' main wing: Citigroup, ExxonMobil, JPMorgan Chase. What the rulers call the Liberal Order (read: U.S. imperialist hegemony) is in danger. Trump has failed to take steps to reverse the U.S. capitalists' faltering attempts to reassert their dominance. Most dangerous for the bosses, Trump has failed to prioritize the rebuilding of working-class confidence in capitalist institutions. As the Council on Foreign Affairs, the finance capitalists' leading think tank, observed with naked alarm:

A hostile revisionist power has indeed arrived on the scene, but it sits in the Oval Office, the beating heart of the free world. Across ancient and modern eras, orders built by great powers have come and gone—but they have usually ended in murder, not suicide...(Foreign Affairs, May/June).

Liberal Order: Out of Order

Today, the reign of U.S. imperialism is in jeopardy. The internal crisis of U.S. capitalism, coupled with ever-fiercer challenges from rising Chinese and resurgent Russian imperialists, are exposing the inherent and lethal instability of the capitalist system:

... [A]mid a wider crisis across the liberal democratic world... governing coalitions that built the postwar order have weakened. Liberal democracy itself appears fragile, vulnerable in particular to far-right populism. Some date these troubles to the global financial crisis of 2008, which widened economic inequality and fueled grievances across the advanced industrial democracies, the original patrons and beneficiaries of the order. ... Western publics have increasingly come to regard the liberal international order not as a source of stability and solidarity among like-minded states but as a global playground for the rich and powerful (Foreign Affairs, May/June).

As U.S. power declines, and inter-imperialist competition intensifies, the Liberal Order is teetering. The capitalists' concern over the growing mass base for fascism around the world—expressed as hyper-racist nationalism from the U.S. and France to Turkey and Iran—reflects their inability to control events as they unfold.

To solve their growing problems, the U.S. bosses must resort to wider conflicts and heightened fascism to discipline their own class as well as the working class. They need racism to divide and exploit workers. But they also need patriotic unity to recruit massive numbers of ground troops for their next world war. As their imperialist rivals grow in strength, potential flashpoints for World War III are multiplying. The bosses worry that the U.S. could "stumble into" war before it is ready:

There is a real risk that events will turn out far worse—a future in which Trump's erratic style and confrontational policies destroy an already fragile world order and lead to open conflict—in the most likely cases, with Iran, China, or North Korea.

Possible Hotspot: Korea

In some ways, North Korea is to China as Israel is to the U.S. While dependent on its powerful imperialist sponsor for trade and aid, its bosses operate relatively autonomously in their home region. Meanwhile, South Korea has been under the military thumb of the

What is the Liberal Order?

The Liberal Order rose at the end of World War II, when U.S. imperialism became the world's leading capitalist power. In 1991, the formal collapse of the Soviet Union—after decades of decay into state capitalism—left the U.S. bosses virtually unchallenged to create a world in their image.

Globally, this meant creating institutions and alliances and trade agreements to legalize imperialism. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the United Nations, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Bank were formed to legitimize exploitation and wars that mainly benefited the U.S. ruling class..

The Liberal Order has coerced the U.S. working class into relying on the bosses' trade unions, police departments, the media, the court system, and the electoral system and political parties. Many Black and Latin workers long ago lost confidence in these ruling-class institutions because of racism. The latest crisis of capitalism has led many oppressed white workers to share their alienation. This is a threat to the U.S. bosses, because it opens the door for more rebellions, strikes, and fightbacks. It's also an opening for workers to learn and take up communist ideas.

U.S. military since the Korean War ended in 1953. The U.S. bosses view the Korean peninsula as a key part of its Pacific sphere of influence, along with Japan, Australia, the Philippines, and Guam. The U.S. needs to sustain its alliance with these nations to counter recent Chinese expansionism in the South China Sea.

While North Korea's nuclear missiles have shown uneven reliability, they are theoretically within striking distance of vital U.S. interests, including cities like Los Angeles and San Diego, the main port of the U.S. Navy's Pacific Fleet.

The bellicose ruler of North Korea, Kim Jong Un, is a problem for both China and the U.S., though for different reasons. "China does not gain if North Korea destabilizes East Asia, or starts a regional arms race that leads Japan and South Korea to build their own nuclear weapons" (The Economist, 4/22). In addition, China needs a stable North Korea as a buffer against South Korea, with its 28,500 U.S. troops massed on the two countries' border. But the Chinese bosses are struggling to rein in their client state:

North Korea's development of nuclear and missile technologies also intensified the situation in Northeast Asia, giving Washington an excuse to enhance its military deployment in the region... This would render China with no cards to play in the face of the US and South Korea...At least for now, what North Korea is doing goes against China's strategic interests... If the North Korean nuclear issue boils over, a war on the peninsula is unavoidable (Global Times, 4/27).

Diplomatic cooperation between China and the U.S. buys time for both rivals to prepare for a bigger war.

Build a Communist Order

Though the U. S. empire is in decline, it remains, at least for now, the number one imperialist, and a threat to workers everywhere. Hundreds of millions are fed up with the Liberal Order. The crucial question before our class is this: To whom do we entrust our future? Whose leadership will we follow in the coming struggles against racism, sexism, exploitation, and imperialist war?

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MAY DAY 2017

CHICAGO

CHICAGO—“Workers from Chicago to South Sudan to Mexico must unite to smash this capitalist system” were the closing words from a comrade who gave a speech at the Progressive Labor Party’s (PLP) rally for International Workers Day: May Day. It was a rainy and cold day in Chicago but that didn’t stop about 50 PLP members and friends from calling out capitalism for its destruction of the lives of working people. We chanted and distributed Challenge to workers walking by and in their cars. Some joined our chants as they passed, and many more honked in solidarity. In this heavily Latin community, our call to smash deportations and fascism was especially well received.

Get Involved In Fighting Back

At the dinner later that day, a comrade summarized the year of struggle we had in Chicago. From marching on racist, murdering kkkop Jason Van Dyke’s house, to helping organize a march on the Fraternal Order of Police (FOP), to fighting back against the racist lead poisoning of workers, we have immersed ourselves in the class struggle against capitalist attacks.

Recommit To Communist Revolution

Another comrade called for all members, and friends to commit and recommit themselves to the revolutionary struggle for communism. We want more than just a few reforms. As the capitalists plan for more imperialist wars and more racist attacks on the working class, we say that a better world is possible! With about 100 in attendance, our comrade called on our friends to join the Party. We need to sharpen the fight against fascism and imperialism and everyone can contribute. He then told a story about a young mother in the Soviet Union during World War II. During the battle of Stalingrad, after dropping her child at the com-



munal daycare, she and her older daughter went straight to their volunteer work digging anti-tank trenches. Everyone has a role to play in fighting for and building communism. When the working class is under attack, we need everyone to step up and be part of an organized fightback. These fightbacks are the building blocks of our future world without sexism and racism; that’s communism!

The past and future of our party were exemplified by a moving tribute to a veteran comrade, and a heartfelt speech by a new member about

why he joined. Spoken word and musical performances enlivened our May Day celebration.

Join the Progressive Labor Party

May Day is a celebration of workers’ struggles but it is also a time for people to recommit themselves to the revolutionary communist struggle. It is a time to get inspired, and to get involved fighting back against school closings, cut backs in healthcare, imperialist wars, and police terror. A united working class is destined to win. Get off the fence! Join the Progressive Labor Party!✚

BAY AREA—This year’s May Day dinner in the Bay Area was multiracial, multi-generational, and inspired working class unity. Over 70 comrades and friends participated. Some travelled from far distances to continue their tradition of celebrating International Worker’s Day with Progressive Labor Party (PLP). The room was filled with posters, banners, and flags that celebrated the power and revolutionary history of communist workers around world. We had two comrades emcee the event, and they did an amazing job setting the tone by telling the history of May Day, leading us in chants, and guiding our “table talk” discussion.

One of the highlights of the event was the table talk. Each table discussed a question like “how do we fight fascism” or “describe a time when you witnessed immigrant labor under attack”. It was inspiring to see so many people, many who didn’t know each other, get immersed into the process of thinking collectively about how we can strategize on fighting growing threats to our class.

At the end, each table shared the highlights of their conversations, allowing folks to see how we have all faced similar oppressions and exploitations as workers under capitalism.

Welcome New Comrade

One comrade gave a speech about why he joined the Progressive Labor Party, and explained his process of political development. This comrade told his story of being a child laborer because his undocumented single mother couldn’t make ends meet, even though she worked day in and day out. He worked for Latinos for Obama because he “truly believed that by working within the system [he] would be able to bring about change in [his] community.”

BAY AREA

He soon became disillusioned by the work he was doing, because he saw that the Democratic Party was the same as the Republican Party, and that both feed false promises to the working class. He realized that revolutionary communism was the only way to worker’s liberation. All of his stories of struggle and resilience were stark reminders of why we must continue to fight, and why the PLP is vital to the triumph of all workers trying to survive this age of decaying capitalism.

Turning Despair into Working-Class Rage

Another young comrade spoke about the importance of turning the sadness, something we often feel when looking at the state of the world, into working-class rage. She explained that it’s okay to be distraught by the fact that half of the Syrian population has been turned into refugees by imperialist war. She described the pain that she feels every time she thinks about all the children who are separated from their parents as they await deportation in private prisons.

Her speech challenged us to turn that pain into class anger. Our class anger propels us to take action against the assaults our brothers and sisters face daily. We will liberate ourselves from our capitalist enemies, and we are confident in the capacity of workers to break their chains once and for all.

Whens we looked around the room, we saw the multiracial, multigender, multigenerational



unity. People all around the world are overcoming racist, sexist, and nationalist divisions. For this, we have a reason to be confident and joyous on May Day.

Overall, the dinner brought new and veteran comrades together and inspired a fightback spirit to fuel us for the long-term struggle. Many people walked away feeling like they were energized by seeing so many people being unafraid, unapologetic, and about their commitment to communist revolution.

This May Day celebration was a reminder of how important it is to build community as we struggle for communism, and to reflect on how powerful our class truly is. After this May Day dinner, our Bay Area comrades are feeling more energized to continue the struggle.✚

MAY DAY 2017

“Why I Joined PLP” Speech given at a May Day Dinner:

Today, I will be sharing with you all my journey in becoming a communist. The people that have been part of this journey are my partner, who introduced me to Marx and helped me re-think nationalism, and my friends who brought the party to me. But mostly I thank my mother, who is not here today.

When I was seven years old, my father abandoned us. As a result, my mother was left with the full responsibility of supporting our family. Unfortunately, as an undocumented immigrant, my mother faced job insecurity and we regularly had to move from apartment to apartment. Mom worked as hard as she could – we would always find her asleep with her work clothes still on. As the oldest of three children, I tried my best to help care for my siblings at home, but I felt inadequate. So at thirteen, I decided to find a job to help contribute financially.

For a thirteen-year-old living in South Central Los Angeles, the only available jobs paid under-the-table and involved menial labor. I started as an errand boy for a local street vendor, selling food in a street corner off MacArthur Park. After that, I sold factory surplus Mary Kay cosmetics door-to-door. In high school, I started working

WHY I JOINED PLP

in a garment factory at night. Despite this, the money my mother and I earned was not always enough to feed the family.

Like most children, I grew up largely ignorant about the institutional barriers that have historically marginalized the working class folk of Los Angeles. As I grew older, however, I witnessed this capitalist system constantly bearing down on my family and community. The status quo left me frustrated and at times, hopeless. Despite this, however, I used my frustration to fuel my drive to take political action and empower my community.

When Obama’s presidential campaign geared up for reelection, I worked for Latinos for Obama as an Organizing Fellow. At that time, I truly believed that by working within the system I would be able to bring about change in my community. I did not realize that was far from the truth. As soon as the campaign was over there was complete disinvestment by the Democratic Party in South Los Angeles. Understanding how the Democratic Party operated from within I understood that the current political climate is based on benefiting capitalist interests while feeding false promises to the working class. Being this

my first experience with traditional politics I felt frustrated. It was clear to me that this system was not built for the working class and that there was no difference between the Democratic or Republican Party.

It is my personal experience and my organizing with the Democratic Party that have brought me to this point in my political development. I became a communist because I believe that the real social, political, and economic change will come. With a revolutionary communist consciousness we must continue to organize for a working-class led revolution! Our best weapon for revolution is our unity, our organization, and our action.

The 1st of May is a date for commemoration around the world. It is a date in which the International Working Class expresses its outright denial of oppression and exploitation by this capitalist system and foreshadows our emancipation. Along side them, our Party will lift our banners to reaffirm our commitment to continually strive for a working class revolution in our country that will contribute to the triumph of an International Proletarian Revolution!

Viva la lucha de clase obrera! Viva la lucha de los trabajadores de todo el mundo! Solo la lucha de los pueblos rompera las cadenas de la dominacion y explotacion!



LOS ANGELES

LOS ANGELES—Tens of thousands of workers took to the streets as part of the Resist LA May Day march. It was the most multiracial, multigenerational march the country has seen in a long time. More Black workers came out than they did for the Women’s March in January or the March for Science on April 22.

PLP had a small but lively contingent that led some militant chants like, “the workers united will never be defeated” and “La migra, la policia, la misma porqueria” (immigration cops, police, all the same crap). This chant connects the incarceration of mainly Black, Latin workers and youth to the incarceration of undocumented and migrant families. Whether we are citizens or undocumented, our common enemy is this capitalist state. PLP got out 250 CHALLENGES along the nearly three-mile march. While turnout was not what it had been in past May Day/immigrants’ rights marches, due to fear of police and ICE repression, the energy was high and there is motivation to make it even bigger next year.

PLP MAY DAY DINNER

The PLP had a rousing dinner, with about 60 comrades and friends in attendance. Accompanied by guitar, djembe and ukuele, our group of teachers, students, health workers, church members, musicians and artistic workers enjoyed a multiracial evening of singing, speeches, interactive games and a video of the history of communist class struggle and the party’s role in it.

We also had lively discussion inspired by one of the games, which was called “pin the nail in the coffin,” of capitalism. The questions, “What have you heard about communism before coming here today either in school, on the news or from people you know?” and “What have you heard about communism here today?” prompted our discussion.

Many friends wrote down the lies that capitalism tells workers and those answers were nailed down on the coffin. These were ideas people wanted to struggle against: the racist, sexist, nationalist, fascist lies oppress the working class.

“To succeed, what features does such a Party need?” That conversation, which could have gone on for much longer, will continue as we work with our comrades and friends in the class struggle.

The PL video presented the Haymarket Affair, the Russian and Chinese Revolutions and the birth of Progressive Labor Party. It was a great way to show how historically that workers have true potential to change the world and how they’ve inspired many ‘til this day. It also brought up the importance of class struggle and how to increase the readership of CHALLENGE. The video ended with having people subscribe to the paper, join the Party, join a study group, and take action. The evening continued with a speech on the state of the world and a call to action. Organizing for a communist society means getting rid of capitalism, a political system that exploits and terrorizes workers worldwide and is leading the dominant imperialists toward a world war that they expect the workers to fight in. We say we will fight for communism! The international working class shall be the human race!✳

TEL AVIV



TEL AVIV—This Year's May 1 fell on on the Israeli Independence Day, so various left groups, including the Histadrut union federation, held the May Day march on April 27. A few thousand participated, including the Progressive Labor Party (PLP).

Gov't Withhold Wages from Black Refugees

The best part of the march: African refugee workers fighting back. Many protested against the racist wage deduction law for refugee workers.

There are over fifty thousand refugees from East Africa, whom the racist Israeli government tries deport to their near-certain deaths. Most have fled the monstrous fascist state at Eritrea or the genocide in South

Sudan. While many are granted visas, they are still not granted the right the work, so they work without documents. Bosses pay them far less than the minimum wage and work them for long hours (see box about the condition of Black workers in Israel).

Effective May 1, the government will be deducting 20 percent of asylum-seekers' wages. The money will be returned when they leave the country. Employers will deposit the deducted wages in a fund managed by Bank Mizrahi-Tefahot (Surely that fund will be making even more money for the bosses.) The fund was approved under the racist Prevention of Infiltration Law.

The law is intentionally driving Black workers to further destitution. The racist Israeli government's intention is to force workers to leave. Instead, they marched on May Day (see photos with signs in both depicted in Tigrinya and Hebrew) demanding an end to the racist law and for better pay and work conditions.

Direct Employment

The Coalition for Direct Employment was also present. Some chanted for the end of contract employment and for workers' rights. There were very few revolutionary slogans, although we PLers did raise such calls.

The Coalition for Direct Employment is an organization fighting against ultra-exploitative and often racist contract bosses. Part of the Coalition's work is organizing contract workers into study groups so they can better fight their bosses for better working conditions.

Greetings to Workers Overseas

We, PLP supporters in "Israel"-Palestine, send our Mayday greetings to comrades and workers overseas. Here, we are faced with life and political work in a country overrun with fascism. The government has won many Jewish workers to racist ideas. The bosses' state has forced the majority of Palestinian workers to despair. The bosses have also passed laws to prosecute opposition groups.

While things are monstrously hard, we retain our hope that with slow and patient work, revolution and liberation will eventually come. If not in our generation, then in our children's generation, and if not in our children's generation, then in our grandchildren's generation. This is the reason we keep fighting

Condition of Black Workers in Israel

The following is an excerpt from "Black Workers Fight Racist Israel" (CHALLENGE, 6/3/15).

Within days of workers and youth rebelling against racist cops in Baltimore, U.S., thousands of Ethiopian-Jewish workers protested in the streets of Tel-Aviv against Apartheid. Black workers here lead the way in fighting racism.

The reason for this protest was racist violence against Ethiopian workers. The trigger was an incident on April 27, where two policemen beat up and arrested Damas Fikadeh. He is a young Ethiopian who serves as an Israel Defense Forces (IDF) soldier in Holon, a city south of Tel-Aviv. What is Damas's crime? He is a Black worker under capitalism. Israeli police thrive on racist violence against Black, Arab, and migrant workers.

The State of Israel brought many Ethiopian Jews here in the 1980s and '90s as a source of cheap labour for Israeli bosses in minimum wage and dead-end jobs. Racism is the order of the day for Black workers in Israel. Ethiopians are coerced in slum neighborhoods and are targets of police terror. While Ethiopians are 2 percent of the population, they make up 30 percent in juvenile jails. Over 41 percent live in official poverty. Unemployment is twice as high among Ethiopians than other Jewish Israelis. The racist system that coerces Black youth into racist housing and school segregation is the same system that controls the Black population by forcibly injecting Ethiopian women with birth control. The Israeli blood bank also rejects or dumps blood donated by Ethiopians. The tremor of rebellion here is about the systematic racism against Black workers.

- the glimpse of hope for a better world where workers will take control over their lives and work from the bosses and build a future of freedom and equality. We say—Jewish, Arab, and Africans—unite for workers' revolution!✳

Stanford Admit Weekend Students Sit In, Demand Sanctuary for Undocumented

STANFORD, CA, April 27—A group of students staged a sit-in demanding sanctuary for undocumented students in front of hundreds of admitted students, families, and administrators during the main University Welcome event. About a dozen students walked onto stage with signs stating, "ICE is not welcome," and sat down for an hour, chanting intermittently.

One parent yelled out, "Only legal immigrants are welcome here," so the students chanted, "ALL immigrants are welcome here! No hate, no fear, immigrants are welcome here!" People from the audience joined in. Several later thanked them for their actions.

Administration did not know what to do with themselves! The Dean of Admissions and Financial Aid Richard Shaw and Provost Persis Drell looked flabbergasted. At the moment they said the protesters were doing this because they love Stanford, and "this is one the things that makes this place so special." Later, the University released a statement in the Stanford Daily expressing "disappointment" in the students' tactics. The university bosses' liberalism only hides their true nature: to perpetuate and normalize the class inequalities—this includes borders and differences based on citizenship.

The next day, even more students stood outside the auditorium with a banner, signs, and chants (see photo).

It was a weekend of action for the over-forty multiracial, multigender students determined to show the incoming class an example of fightback against the racist policies on campus, and to demand that Stanford be a sanctuary campus. Stanford is one of many campuses across the country where students, faculty and campus workers are fighting to safeguard against president Trump's deportation plans.

Progressive Labor Party applauds the antiracist actions of these students. They are part of a long-term struggle to abolish borders. Wherever there is an opportunity to expose the deadly liberalism of universities and their role in endorsing racism, there is also an opportunity for the fighters to become working-class leaders for a border-less and egalitarian world.



The Battle for Sanctuary

Since the election of Trump, Stanford Sanctuary Now (SSN) has been working to make Stanford a sanctuary campus. Their demands include:

- Supporting students offering need-blind admission (the college doesn't consider family's finances when deciding to admit) to all students, including undocumented and international students.
- Protect campus workers, as they are the most exploited and at-risk of harassment. SSN considers them as much a part of Stanford as the students and faculty, because without them, they would not have food to eat and clean classrooms
- Stanford should refuse to cooperate with Immigration Customs Enforcement (immigration police)
- Provide free legal services to all students, campus workers, and their families
- Divest from private prisons and detention centers and all other corporations that profit from displacement and exploitation of immigrants, refugees, Black, and indigenous communities.

For the past few months, the students have been meeting with administration to push these demands. After several meetings, their intentions were clear. The racist administration has sanctuary, hurting undocumented students and workers on campus.

What's more, the university bosses counter that a sanctuary campus will endanger the lives of the undocumented. They have also have patronized and ignored the formerly undocumented students who are leading the movement, telling them that Stanford has "plenty of undocumented applicants." The bosses have gone on to claim the only place where undocumented are targeted is at the southern border. So much fake news, so many lies for a university that prides itself on intellectual superiority.

The meetings with administration have exposed the university bosses for the rotten capitalist goons they are. It was then they decided to escalate to direct actions. It is evident that students can only rely on themselves and the campus workers to fight back.

The students and workers at Stanford can benefit by arming themselves with communist politics and a fighting organization. Progressive Labor Party fights to abolish borders, when all of the working class belongs to one world. To find out more about PLP, follow us on twitter @PLPchallenge.✳

LETTERS

We encourage all CHALLENGE readers to send in letters and articles about their experiences fighting the bosses worldwide.

I’ve Marched Before, But This was Different

I have been a fighter for many years, and have marched to express my rage for many problems created by capitalism. I have marched against the racist murder of black, and other, workers. I have marched against for-profit healthcare, and I have marched against Wall Street corruption and theft, among other things. But I have never marched for an actual solution before.

Marching for communism [in New York City] felt very different. It felt serious, of course, to be marching for revolution, but it was also celebratory, to gather with others who shared my vision for what the world could be.

The thing that blew me away most of all was the reception by the workers we passed along the route. So many people wanted to celebrate with us, often dancing and raising their fists, sometimes even joining our chants or the march. And it felt fabulous to bring communism to the masses with our banners and chants and have it received with such emphatic support.

I feel honored to be a part of the history of the struggle and sacrifice associated with May Day, and more excited than ever to bring communist ideas to workers in Boston.

★★★★★

Reflection: Bay Area May Day

The May Day dinner in the Bay Area went very well! The energy was hot. All generations were present and most all laughed when one speaker (accidentally) said, “we have in this room from those in diapers to the old, old people...” Whether Red Diaper or Red Depends, all in attendance are angry at the state of the world and are looking for the way out.

It’s apparent that our way is one based on history, science, critical thought and the ever confusing, yet important Dialectical Materialism. More importantly, we lead through example and action with a multiracial, all gender, and working-class unity. We don’t espouse fashionable cultural nationalist ideas, “sexy socialism” or the clichéd “white supremacy and male patriarchy.” Instead we offer critical thought based on consistent action and constant study.

In this sense, the dinner offered nutrients not only from the classic hot links, ribs, salads, veggie lasagna, and black-eyed peas, but also from the working-class unity and fightback. You’d be hard pressed to find another political event or political group of people like us. And although we get bogged down in the realities of convincing the seemingly invincible, overworked and pessimistic masses (of which our family and friends are some of our harshest critics) we should take great pride in our efforts and passion!

It becomes more and more clear that other groups and politicians have no real plan for workers, except more suffering and reforms that recycle back into the capitalist matrix.

The work will continue. The May Day dinner was a boost of vitamin “C.”

★★★★★

Happy Birthday, Lenin!

April 22 was the anniversary of Lenin’s birth, on April 22, 1870. His birth name was Vladimir Il-ich Ulyanov. “Lenin” was his revolutionary name.

Lenin was one the greatest revolutionaries who has ever lived. He is one of the giants, along with Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. We still have a great deal to learn from him.

Other great revolutionaries have come from the working class—Stalin was one of these. Lenin came from the petty bourgeoisie, as did Marx and Engels. They showed that, in the last analysis, what counts for every individual is his or her

ideology, and what he or she decides to dedicate their lives to.

Like Marx and Engels, his great teachers and models, Lenin dedicated his life to the exploited and oppressed of the world - the working class first of all, but also the peasantry and those super-exploited by colonialism and racism.

We should study Lenin’s works—critically, of course. But respectfully too, since we have much to learn. Hard to do: be both critical and respectful. It’s something we have to learn to do better.

Lenin represented a whole movement and an entire historical epoch. He did nothing “by himself.” At the same time, he pushed the working class struggle for communism ahead by his tireless efforts.

We, and class-conscious workers, intellectuals, students, and others everywhere, owe him an immense debt. The best way to acknowledge that debt is by working for communist revolution, the best we can.

So, Happy Birthday, Lenin! A great inspiration to us all, every day!

★★★★★

Israel, U.S. Fascism’s Partner in Crime

Regarding the hypocritical “humanitarianism” discussed in the May 3 CHALLENGE editorial, we would like to note that Trump and his Pentagon pals are clearly giving Israel, their partner in imperialist crime, a green light to join them in stepping up military attacks in Syria.

In a predawn raid on April 27, Israeli jets struck deep into Syria, bombing airport facilities southwest of Damascus and “setting of a series of explosions” (AP 4/27). When we expose U.S. crimes, we should always consider the role of the religious/terrorist entity known as Israel, which has slaughtered tens of thousands of Palestinians and conducts an ongoing program of robbing Palestinians of their land.

Immediately after the chemical attack, Syria, Russia and several other countries sponsored a U.N. resolution calling for an investigation of the attack, but the U.S. and Israel blocked this measure.

Israel continues to call on the U.S. to recognize Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights, which they stole from Syria in 1967. When Israel invaded the Golan Heights in 1967, it drove 120,000 people out of their homes and demolished over 100 Syrian villages and farms. Later, land there was given to Israeli settlers. Zionist fanatics destroyed every building, including the Golan Hospital, in Quneitra, the largest town in the area, with dynamite and bulldozers.

Israel’s most immediate target these days is Hezbollah, a Shia insurgent group, formed in response to Israel’s invasions of Lebanon in 1978 and 1982 (*Inside Syria* by Reese Erlich, p. 68). Hezbollah fought Israel’s troops to a standstill, forcing them out of Lebanon in 2000. Israel said its April 27 and other recent air raids in Syria were aimed at Hezbollah.

U.S. forces are now fighting alongside Shiite forces in Iraq, while Saudi Arabia, the other fascist U.S. ally in the Middle East, bombs Shiites relentlessly in Yemen. Israel and the U.S. are clearly employing divide-and-conquer tactics in the Middle East.

Eleven million Syrian refugees are acceptable to them as long as Mideast workers are fighting each other.

It is high time for Jewish, Palestinian, and Syrian workers to unite as true communists within the Progressive Labor Party. It is high time for all of us to shake off Dark Age religions, get rid of oppressive, Zionist, Palestinian, Syrian and other

“patriotic” misleaders, and help build a decent system, communism, so that all good people can “step into the future” with their children and their brother and sister workers.

★★★★★

Debate on Baldwin

The letter “Review Wrongly Attacks the Man, Not content” (4/19) criticizing the movie review article of “I Am Not Your Negro” tries to make sense of James Baldwin’s anti-Semitism, which, whomever you ask, was notorious. The letter explained that, as Baldwin saw it, in Harlem, Blacks hated Jewish shopkeepers, landlords and teachers because they were the local representations of bourgeois whites.

E. Franklin Frazier, the late Howard University Sociology professor, in the book *Black Bourgeoisie*, saw it another way. “Because would-be middle class Blacks are thwarted from showing hostility towards whites, as such, they go on against Italians and others, also targets of discrimination.... They blame the Jew for the poverty of Negroes and for their own failures and inefficiencies in their business undertakings....they are attempting at the same time to identify with the white American majority.”

The Romans, in their repression of various groups, had the well-known policy of divide and conquer. By sucking up to the rulers and assuming the bosses’ general prejudices, with envy as a distorted motive, it is natural to slur over class differences and mistake Jewish teachers with the enemy, as is the case in the letter.

Without a communist view, Baldwin, and those with such misguided hostility, can be pawns in the capitalists’ failing drive to blunt the workers’ current struggles against racism.

★★★★★

Let Us Not Forget the Korean War

Given the possibility of war on the Korean peninsula, here is a poem by William Childress. He was a combat engineer in the military in the Korean War and the Vietnam War. Childress was born to a poor family of migrant sharecroppers during the Depression. He joined the Army to be guaranteed three meals and clothing without patches.

This poem reminds us of the brutality of the U.S. occupation.

“The Warlords’ Prayer” (1972)

Our warlords who art in Pentagon.

Putrid be thy names,
Thy war machines come,
Thy murders be done,

In Viet Nam as in Korea.

Miscount this day our daily dead,

And forget us our casualties.
As we forget babies we napalm.

And lead us not to cease-fire.

And deliver us from pacifists.

For yours are the dollars.
The senators, and the lobbyists, And the chauvinists forever. Amen

A lot of what North Korea became is due to the terrible onslaught they suffered at the hands of the U.S. military. Yet they and the Chinese Red Army drove the U.S. out of North Korea and fought it to a draw. The fall of the old movement, and the return of full-blown capitalism in China and Korea, reminds us why we fight directly for communism. The lives of our class depend on it.

★★★★★

Editorial

Continued from page 2

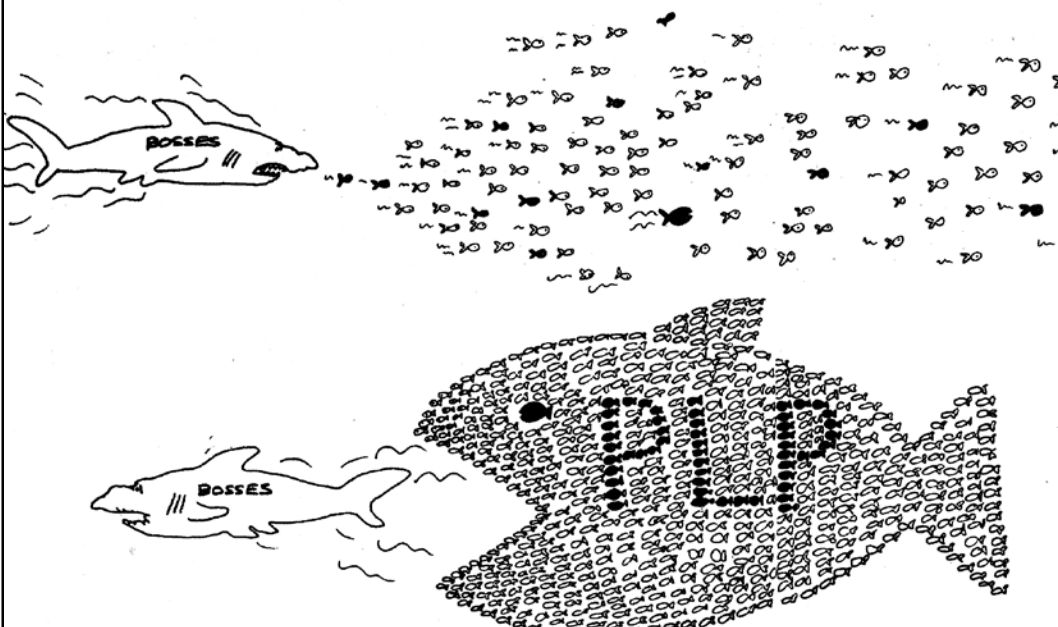
In past crises, the working class, led by its international communist party, has taken up the challenge. Twice in the last century, in the Soviet Union and then in China, it has seized power and built a society run by workers. The fact that these revolutions were reversed, primarily because of political weaknesses, doesn't change the fact that communists led workers to take state power. And communists, especially the heroic Soviet Red Army under Joseph Stalin, led workers to smash Hitler's fascism in World War II.

Capitalism is a deadly system. It serves the needs of the capitalist bosses by attacking the world's workers. It cannot be reformed to meet workers' needs. There are no lesser evils, "good" corporations, or "friendly" cops. Sooner or later, the capitalist profit system must resort to racist, fascist terror and war.

The long-term goal of Progressive Labor Party is to lead the working class in a communist revolution to take power once more. This time we will destroy capitalism once and for all, along with the racism, sexism, and imperialism it feeds on. We will build a communist world that serves the needs of the international working class, not the bosses' profits—from each according to commitment, to each according to need. It is not an easy fight. Yet even in the current period, we are growing modestly.

And we can continue to grow. Join PLP! Help make it a mass party of the working class, a party steered in fighting and giving leadership in small and large battles against the bosses—in the factories, unions, schools, churches and community organizations. Each new member of PLP, each new CHALLENGE subscriber, becomes a step forward on the long march to working-class liberation.✪

NYC MAY DAY



Why we need the party

Continued from page 8

Revolution vs. Reform

Compared to PLP's small communist May Day, the mass march in Downtown Manhattan was barely mass, and hardly lively. The uplifting part: all the workers from unions and community organizations who showed up and interested in fighting back. But the relatively low turnout reflected the low level of class struggle at this point in history. All the leadership of the unions and community groups represented the base of the Demo-

cratic Party. PLP held a banner that read, "Imperialist Wars Enslave Workers—Communist Revolution Is Our Liberation" and distributed CHALLENGES.

The system is a growing house of horrors. Our class is facing brutal attacks by the bosses, and the terrors and ravages of world war are soon approaching. The rise of a racist, fascist movement is a real possibility, and both workers and communists have countless challenges and assaults to face by the rulers. Yet, the future is bright, because we are building a new world. PLP is 52 years old, but we are still a young and revitalized Party. Onward to another year of fightback! Happy May Day!✪



RED EYE ON THE NEWS . . .

Below are excerpts from mainstream newspapers that may be of use for our readers. Abbreviations: NYT=New York Times, GW=Guardian Weekly, LAT=Los Angeles Times

Robots are racist and sexist, just like their creators

GW, 4/28 — Recent reports have shown that machine-learning systems are picking up racist and sexist ideas embedded in the language patterns that are fed by human engineers.

Robots have been racist and sexist for as long as the people who created them have been....We are moving into an era when "smart" machines will have more and more influence on our lives. Last year Microsoft created a chatbot, Tay, which could "learn" and develop as it engaged with users on social media. Within hours it had pledged allegiance to Hitler and started repeating 'alt-right' slogans — which is what happens when you give Twitter a baby to raise.

Fake drug tests imprisoned 21,857 for years

NYT, 4/20 — Massachusetts agreed to throw out more than 20,000 drug convictions dating back to 2003 because a single crime lab chemist, Annie Dookhan, admitted in 2012 that she had doctored or completely made up drug test results for years....It should have happened years earlier.

Instead, prosecutors dragged their feet...making one excuse after another for why they shouldn't...dismiss convictions based on obviously tainted evidence....Prosecutors and other...officials who oversee the labs want to win cases....They cling to techniques...of questionable value at best, if they aren't provably useless.

A 2015 review...found that its forensic hair-sample analysts testified wrongly in favor of the prosecution 96 percent of the time...Dookhan handled...21,857 [cases] at last count. Thousands of people [were] wrongly imprisoned — some for years — [and] thousands more...have continued to suffer the effects of criminal records after they were released.

U.S. Richest 400 exceeds 3/5 of country's workers

NYT, 4/15 — The Forbes 400 list of the richest Americans — all billionaires, not counting the 100 or so billionaires who didn't make the cut — have wealth greater than the bottom 61 percent of Americans....And for all their donations, they receive healthy tax breaks that the U.S. Treasury estimated would cost \$740 billion in lost tax revenues over the next decade.

CIA & Kissinger instigated overthrow of Chile's government

NYT, 4/20 — Augustin Edwards, the Chilean media magnate who published El Mercurio...and played a crucial role in overthrowing the socialist government of Salvador Allende in 1972, died....

Edwards...heir to a corporate empire...amassed a fortune in mining, banking, agriculture, publishing and even whaling...Embarked his companies and media outlets in a relentless war against international communism....He...urge[d] American officials to intervene to prevent an Allende victory....To further that cause, his newspaper group received money from the Central Intelligence Agency....With the election of Mr. Allende....Edwards met with Richard Helms, the director of [the] C.I.A., at the request of President Nixon's national security advisor, Henry Kissinger...."Edwards not only advocated a pre-emptive military coup in his meeting with Helms, but also

supplied intelligence on potential coup plotters that the C.I.A. could enlist," said [the] head of the Chile Declassification Project...in Washington....

El Mercurio...spearheaded a propaganda campaign against the Allende government, again drawing C.I.A. support — about \$2 million. El Mercurio had been receiving C.I.A. funds since the 1960s....Edwards...fled to the United States. There, his friend David Rockefeller, president of Chase Manhattan Bank...helped the family get settled....

Allende was overthrown in September 1973....El Mercurio pledged immediate loyalty to the new military rulers, led by Gen. Augusto Pinochet....ad it continued to receive C.I.A. funds to portray the military junta "in a positive light...."

Throughout General Pinochet's 17-year dictatorship, El Mercurio lent credence to the military's misinformation campaigns and denied the extensive...human rights violations taking place....One of Mr. Edwards's sons, Cristian,...moved to the United States and worked for The New York Times, becoming...vice president of New York Times Digital.

Federal 'consent decrees' fail to curb racist cops

NYT, 4/10 — Federal intervention to curb police abuse....began 21 years ago here in Pittsburgh, where the police were laden with complaints that black residents were routinely singled out for false arrest and abuse...The first federal "consent decree"...turned Pittsburgh into a...model department....[But] in Pittsburgh, lawyers had been collecting complaints and learned that over 20 years, only one police officer had been disciplined—one who had an altercation with a black man who happened to be the deputy city solicitor.

Obama-era investigative reports were filled with...statistics; a 75-year-old homeless man shot with a stun gun for refusing to leave a bus stop....

FROM 1917 TO 2017

WORKERS FIGHT BACK



MAY DAY MARCH IN BROOKLYN

NEW YORK CITY—Over three hundred workers, students, friends, and comrades in the Progressive Labor Party rocked the streets of Flatbush this May Day. For three hours, the streets were brushed red, and the working class was boosted with confidence. Indeed, this world is ours to win, ours to safeguard; this working class is ours to serve, ours to lead.

We chanted “Shut It Down” and “What Day? May Day! Whose Day? Our Day!” to reggae beats. In addition to our usual reggae and dancehall, the DJs also played salsa beats this year. Passersby came out of stores and homes to watch PLP marching by. They pumped their fists in the air and danced to the music (see letter, page 6). Some strangers even chanted, “Who are we? PLP!” in unison with the marchers. We distributed over 2,300 CHALLENGE newspapers in English, Spanish, and French Kreole.

People hailed from all five boroughs, as well as from Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Baltimore, Boston, and Washington, DC.

May Day is International Workers’ Day. Its origin comes from the struggle for an eight-hour workday in Chicago in 1886. While it is officially celebrated in 80 countries, the U.S. bosses don’t recognize it. PLP has been raising the red flag on

May Day for over 30 years. It is a day to celebrate all the gains of revolutions and rebellions of the past, advance the fightback of the present, and build a communist revolution for the future.

This year’s May Day was especially important: it is a centennial celebration of the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917. One hundred years ago, the working class fought for and eventually ruled one sixth of the whole world.

We commenced the day with a passionate and haunting song about our sisters and brothers slain by the police, “Too Many Names.” We also heard an inspiring speech about a new comrade of why he joined PLP.

Working-Class Creativity

The beauty of May Day is the show of force and collectivity.

2017 is the first in a long time for us to incorporate artwork as part of the May Day march. Together, we created huge fists of different colors, designs, and slogans. We also brought movement and color to a well-known cartoon (see page 7)—a school of red fish attacks a green capitalist shark. The fish puppets looked formidable with their fang-like teeth and scarlet red bodies painted with slogans in Spanish, English, and Bangla. Many of the fish had names those targeted by

PL by the Numbers:
52 Years
27 Countries
5 Continents
1 Class
1 Party

police painted on them; the spectres of Shantel Davis, Kiki Gray, Kyam Livingston, Michael Brown, and Tyrone West, each representing the fightback and rebellions that rose from the deaths, have come back to haunt the capitalists.

The main victory of this artwork was the collective nature of the production. Everything, including the politics, was discussed, decided, and produced by a multiracial multigenerational group of women and men. This goes against what capitalism says about what art can be: individual creation of one “genius,” owned by and for the genius.

We look forward to what artwork and collectivity next year will bring.

**Proud to Be Working Class,
Proud to Be Communist**

The keynote speaker of the march gave an emboldening delivery and called on our working-class pride.

We’ve achieved workers’ power in the past, and we can do it again. The numbers are on our side!

We’ve built society from the ground up with blood, sweat, and tears. We built the homes, roads, and the bridges! We are the teachers, the students, soldiers, service workers, healthcare workers, electricians, technicians and engineers. We produce the food, the meds, and the cure.

I’m talking working-class pride y’all!

Whether you are a young student, construction worker, engineer, unemployed worker, soldier, or street vendor—pledge your allegiance to the working class of the world.

Like our enthusiastic keynote speaker said,

If you want this new world without racism, sexism imperialist wars, we must fight for it! Join PLP. When the working class is under attack what do we do! Stand up fight Back!

Continued on page 7

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